

no mere man has ever succeeded in keeping these two great commandments perfectly or adequately, either in letter or in spirit. And no man has ever consistently and adequately made the effort. His very purposes are vacillating and his efforts are intermittent. If men are to be saved by keeping the two great commandments, then none are ever saved. These commandments are, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." One must have a degenerate conception of moral standards who thinks that any mere human life ever fulfilled these requirements; and how crude a conception of moral adjustments must one have who thinks that trying to keep these laws in our halting, feeble, and pitiful way, entitles a soul to salvation or in any adequate sense constitutes Christian character. It is undoubtedly the Christian's duty to keep these high standards before the mind as the ideal of the soul toward which he shall ever aim, but there are vital, fundamental facts entering into Christian character which are not stated in our Lord's definition of moral obligation.

Christian character consists, in part, of being a partaker of the redemptive work of our Lord, by virtue of which guilt is removed and the soul is brought in legal union with Christ so that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." The soul is found in him not having its "own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ." This character has yet a more experimental aspect. We accordingly find that it has vital sources and is sustained and receives its quality through union with another life, Christ dwells in the heart by faith, Christ is "in you, the hope of glory." "Christ liveth in me," says Paul, and we must insist that this indwelling of Christ is an essential part of Christian character. His love refines the affections, his wisdom illumines the intellect and his volition determines the will.

Christian character is the product of divine grace, and is the fruit and expression of gracious influences affecting the soul. When that character is seen we do not say that it is the product of an effort to keep the moral law, but rather it is the product of a Divine agent imparting a Divine energy to the soul and giving that soul holy qualities. The Christian character is one whose very life and all excellent qualities are the evidence, the effect, the creation of the indwelling Spirit of God. It is sanctified; it is a regenerated life; it is nourished with spiritual food; it inhales a spiritual atmosphere; its sources and qualities are God-given.

We would say then, as a partially adequate definition, that a Christian character is one which by faith is a partaker of Christ's redemption through his atoning blood; is a partaker of his life by vital union with him; is sanctified by the indwelling of his Holy Spirit; is consecrated by that Spirit to his service; and who sincerely accepts as the summary of all moral obligation the two great commandments, sincerely seeking and depending upon the Divine Spirit to qualify the soul for glorifying God in body and spirit, which are his.

The Defence of the Faith

TWO TYPES OF FOOLISH MEN.

A recent writer, whose good common sense and scholarship are not less than his power of imagination and striking illustration, describes two of the most foolish men of whom he can conceive. He puts the matter into the form of a traveler's story. The traveler approaches a great range of mountains that lifts itself into the clouds and spreads its foundation over an area of many miles, making the gigantic backbone of a continent. As he draws near to its foot he beholds there a man lustily trying to turn over the mountain. He justly pronounces him the most foolish man he has ever seen. The mere thought that he can with his little hand spike uproot and remove the mountain. The haps, in ascending the mighty range and going down traveler journeys on, spends many hours, a day per on the further side. Arrived at its foot, he espies another man. This one is in a state of great excitement. He is leaning with all his might against the precipitous face of the mighty mountain, bracing himself with all his might as he presses his shoulder against rock. When asked by what he is so stirred and for what he is working so strenuously, he answers that word has come to him that there is a strong man on the other side trying to overturn the mountain and he is not going to allow it to be done if it can be helped, that he intends to protect it and hold it in its place. The traveler pronounces him even more foolish than the other.

The "impregnable rock of the word," as Gladstone called it, cannot be overturned by the power of the little human intellect and the great human enmity. The man who, puffed up with conceit, thinks he has found the way to do it, shows himself to be devoid of both knowledge and wisdom, of knowledge of the futility of all the efforts of the ages to destroy or pull down or overturn the Bible, and of wisdom as to the reasons why it cannot be destroyed. That man is even more foolish, however, who is alarmed for the safety of the Word of God and who exhausts his strength in the effort to prevent the enemy of the Bible from destroying it. The Bible has stood thus far. The same elements which have given it permanency in the past are in it still and will sustain it. It is "the word of God which liveth and abideth forever."

I live for those who love me,
For those who know me true;
For the Heaven that smiles above me,
And waits my spirit, too;
For the cause that lacks assistance,
For the wrong that needs resistance,
For the future in the distance
And the good that I can do.

—Barton.